

**Forest Service**

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# News Release

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## **Tonto National Forest releases final Environmental Impact Statement, draft decision for Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange**

**PHOENIX, January 15, 2021 — For Immediate Release.** Today, USDA Forest Service released the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and draft Record of Decision (ROD) for the Resolution Copper Project and Land Exchange.

The FEIS describes the potential environmental effects from two proposed actions: a general plan of operations for development of a large-scale underground copper mine by Resolution Copper Mining, LLC.; and a related, legislatively mandated land exchange. The draft ROD explains the Forest Service's rationale and decision concerning the proposed action for which the agency prepared an environmental impact statement. The FEIS also includes detailed mitigation measures to minimize impacts.

The Resolution Copper project is a proposed underground copper mine near the town of Superior, Arizona. The Project would create one of the largest copper mines in the United States. The mine is projected to create about 1,450 jobs and pay about \$149 million annually. Additionally, the mine is estimated to generate between \$80 and \$120 million per year in State and local taxes and another \$200 million per year for the federal government.

The public may access the FEIS and draft ROD along with related documents on the project website at <https://www.resolutionmineeis.us/>.

The Tonto National Forest prepared the FEIS for use as the basis for all decisions under Federal law related to the proposed mine and the Resolution mine plan of operations and any related major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

“Our multiple use mission means that we have to balance demand for mineral extraction and the related economic benefits with our commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability,” said Tom Torres, acting Tonto National Forest supervisor. “The Forest Service is required by regulation to consider mining plans of operations on our public lands, ensure the plans comply with environmental regulations, and minimize any adverse impacts to the extent feasible.

“This project is complex, and the impacts were rigorously analyzed over the past five years,” Torres continued. “The final EIS and resulting draft decision include numerous changes and mitigation measures that seek to minimize the environmental effects from the mining operations, especially the new location of the tailings facility.

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“The project also included consultation with affected Indian tribes to best address the negative impacts to sacred tribal lands,” Torres added. “Consistent with the legislative language, we have sought to address these impacts in consultation with the mining company and will establish numerous programs to alleviate those concerns now and into the future.”

A Notice of Availability was released alongside the final EIS and draft ROD in the Federal Register and begins a 45-day objection period for people who had previously submitted specific comments regarding the proposed project in accordance with regulations at 36 CFR 218.5(a). The Southwestern Regional Forester is overseeing the objection process.

Tonto officials expect to announce the final Record of Decision in summer 2021. Section 3003 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 mandated a land exchange from the federal government to Resolution Copper Mining. This includes land previously withdrawn from mineral entry. Once an environmental impact statement is complete and a decision is rendered the land exchange will give Resolution Copper Mining legal access to the copper ore deposit.

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